(c) the balance trained personnel will be considered for promotion as Telecom Mechanic after working out the additional justification as per norms against increase in assets on yearly basis.

Application for Telephone Connections

†1211. CHAUDHARY HARMOHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for telephone connections received by Ranikhet Exchange from Bhandar Khola, Tarai, Dungari, Bamora and Maidari villages of Almora District;

(b) by when, Government propose to provide the residents of the said villages with telephone connections; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take for extending/developing telephone network in Talla Salt Patti of Almora District?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Only one application for telephone connection has been received by Ranikhet exchange from Tarari village alone. It is proposed to provide telephone connection to the applicant by March, 2002. However, Village Public Telephones (VPTs) are proposed to be provided in these villages by March, 2002 by underground cable/overhead lines.

(c) It is planned to open new telephone exchanges at Machhod and Harada during 2001-2002 for extending/developing telephone services in Talla Salt Patti of Almora District. Simultaneously, it is also being planned to install Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) system at Shasikhal Telephone Exchange during 2002-2003. However, the places which are not likely to be covered by WLL system are proposed to be covered by Statellite Terminals.

ISD calls on cheaper rate

†1212. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of making ISD calls on cheaper rates which have been brought to Governments' notice during the last three years, State-wise;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether wsome telephone officers/employees are also involved in these cases;

(c) if so, the action taken so far in this regard; and

(d) the financial loss suffered by Government and the steps being taken by Government to check the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Post Office facilities in Tribal Areas of A.P.

1213. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that villages in the Tribal dominated districts in Andhra Pradesh do not have Post Office facilities within a distance of five kilometers and more;

(b) if so, the details of such villages, district-wise; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to provide postal facilities to the Tribals of these villages within a time frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The postal facility is available at all the villages in the country including those in the tribal dominated districts of Andhra Pradesh as far as the daily delivery, collection of mails and sale of postal stamps & stationery is concerned.

(b) The details of villages where post offices do not exist within the distance of five kilometers or more in the tribal dominated districts in Andhra Pradesh district-wise are given in the statement (*see* below)

(c) Relaxed norms in terms of population & income are applicable to the tribal areas. A Post Office can be opened in the tribal area with 500 population in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages. Anticipated income has to be 15% only of the cost against 33.33% in the normal areas. New Post Offices are opened on norm based justification and subject to the availability of resources including sanction of the requisite posts of Gram Dak Sewaks by the Government.